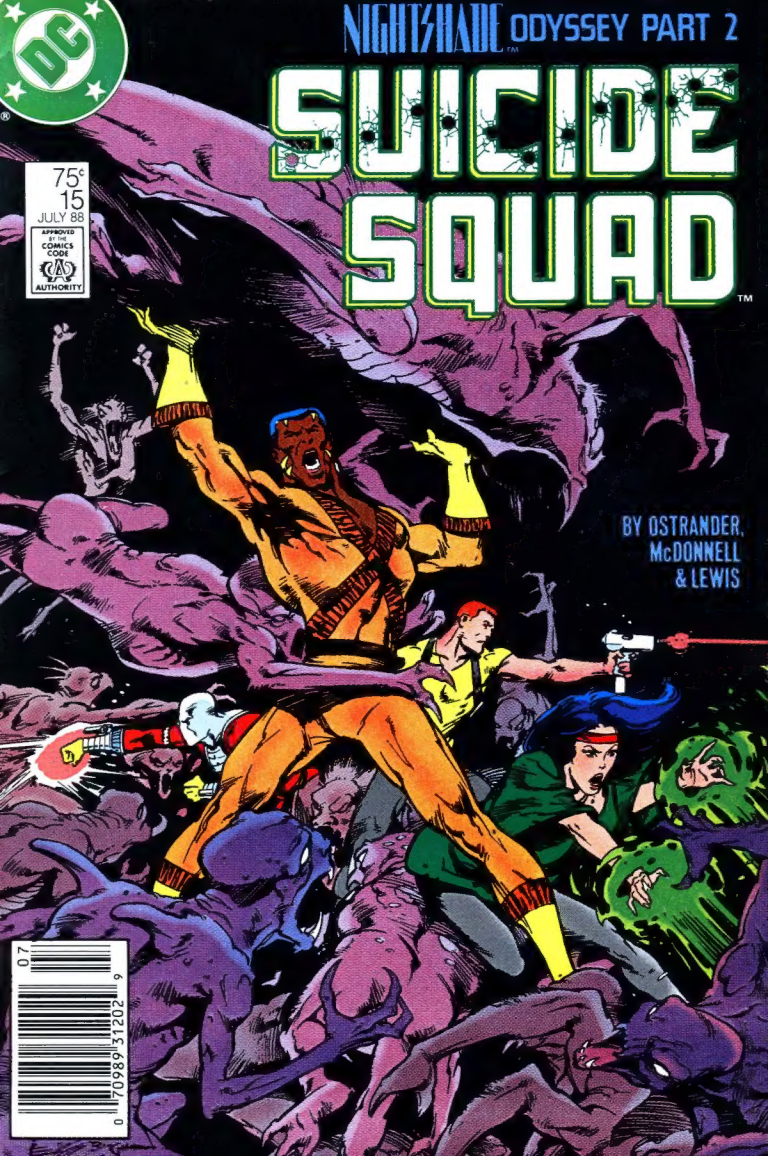
NIGHTSHADE™ ODYSSEY PART 2

SUICIDE SQUAD™

75¢
15
JULY 88

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

BY OSTRANDER, McDONNELL & LEWIS



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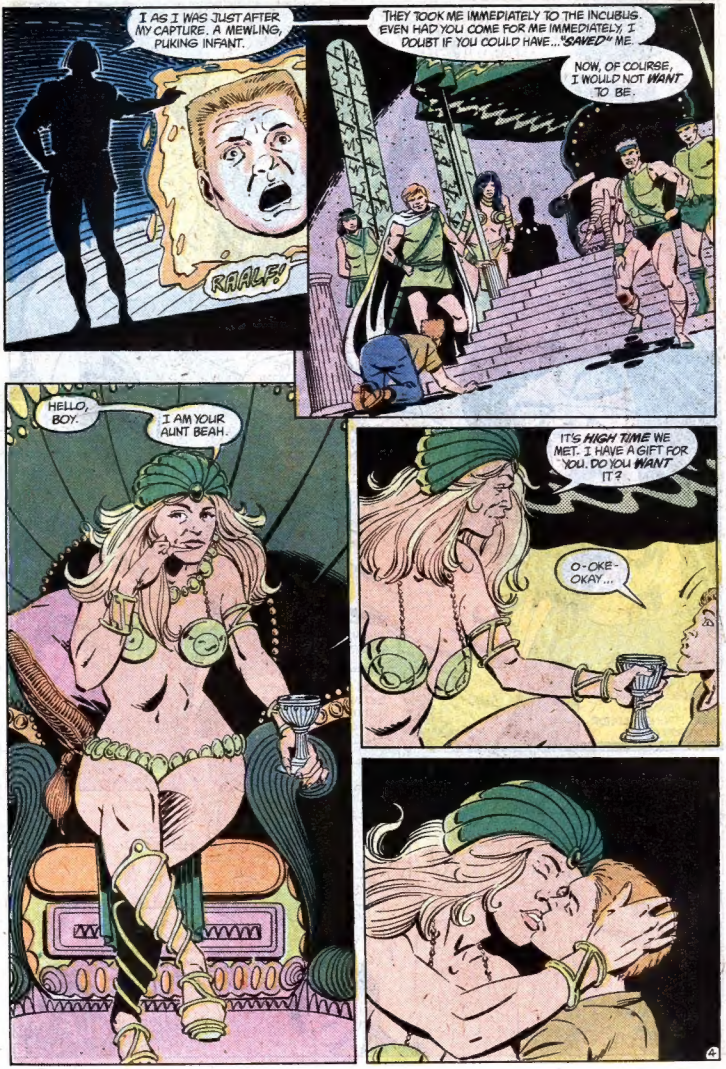
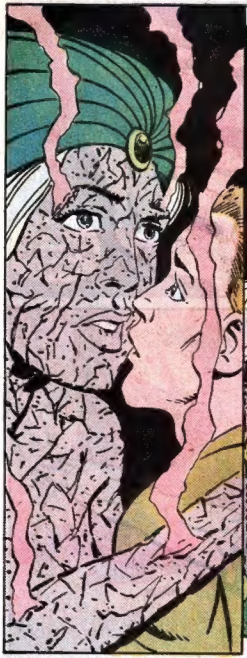
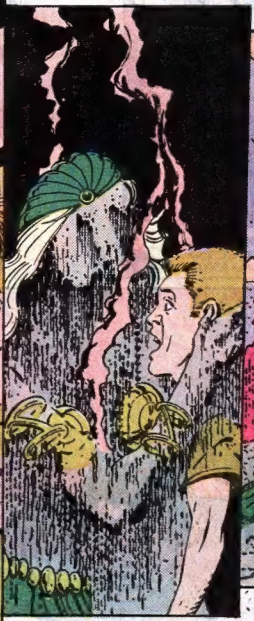
'STREWTH!
YOU DONE THIS T'IME, YA STINKIN' ABO! YOU DID!
GOT ME DRUNK AND SHANGHAIED ME ON THIS DAFT MISSION TO SAVE EVE-BLOODY-EDEN'S DRONGO OF A BROTHER FROM A STINKER CALLED THE INCUBUS.
I'M HER BROTHER.
OH. YEAH? WELL, I GUESS THAT'S ALL RIGHT THEN, INNIT?
LISTEN, WHAT SAY YOU AND ME FIND A WAY T' SCARPER BEFORE WE GET NICKED.
I'M ALSO THE INCUBUS.
OH, HELL!
OH, BLOODY HELL!
OH, GODDAMNED BLOODY HELL!
2

RRUMMMBLE
SHWOK SHOMP!
NO! PLEASE! DON'T PIN ME LIKE THIS! I'M GONNA BE SICK!
RAAALF
OH, BLOODY HELL!
WELL, SISTER, SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.
YOU'VE GROWN.
YOU CAN'T BE THE INCUBUS! OR--IF YOU ARE--YOU CAN'T REALLY BE MY BROTHER!
THE INCUBUS ALREADY EXISTED WHEN WE ENTERED THIS DIMENSION AND LARRY WAS CAUGHT!*
AHHH, SISTER, SISTER, SISTER.
YOU DEFINE REALITY TOO MUCH BY THE FLESH. ALTHOUGH YOUR FLESH IS REALLY WELL DEFINED.
*FOR THE FULL STORY, CHECK SECRET ORIGINS #28 -- PENNED BY YOUR FRIENDLY EDITOR-- BOB!
REALITY IS MUCH MORE MALLEABLE THAN YOU CONCEIVE, SISTER. AS ARE MATTERS OF TIME AND SPACE.
I SHALL SHOW YOU WHAT WAS SO THAT YOU MAY UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL BE.
RAAAALF

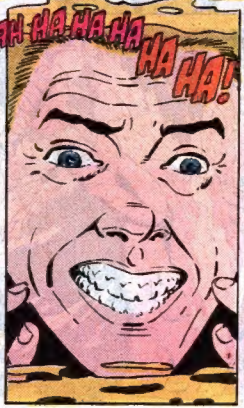

I AS I WAS JUST AFTER MY CAPTURE. A MEWLING, PUKING INFANT.
RAAAL!
THEY TOOK ME IMMEDIATELY TO THE INCUBUS. EVEN HAD YOU COME FOR ME IMMEDIATELY, I DOUBT IF YOU COULD HAVE... "SAVED" ME.
NOW, OF COURSE, I WOULD NOT WANT TO BE.
HELLO, BOY.
I AM YOUR AUNT BEAH.
IT'S HIGH TIME WE MET. I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU. DO YOU WANT IT?
O-OKE-OKAY...
4





Go

EHUH EHUH


EHAH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

AUNT BEAH WAS POSSESSED BY THE INCUBUS AND THEN PASSED HIM ON TO ME.
WE LIKE TO KEEP HIM IN THE FAMILY.

OF COURSE, MOTHER AND AUNT BEAH BEING THE SAME SEX WAS INIMICAL TO MY FATHER'S PLAN.
DAD'S PLAN?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

HAHAHA! NO, NO--NOT MY PHYSICAL FATHER!

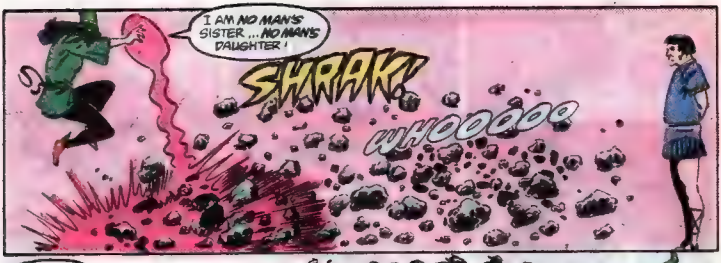
I SPEAK OF MY TRUE FATHER--THE FATHER OF MY SOUL--AZMODEUS!

THIS WAS ONCE ALL HIS DOMAIN AND THERE WAS NO NIGHT HERE.
HE STIRRED HIS BROTHER PRINCES TO WAR AGAINST THEIR OVERLORD.

"THEY WERE DEFEATED, STRIPPED OF THEIR LANDS, AND BANNED FROM EVER PHYSICALLY RETURNING TO THEM. BUT AZHMODEUS PLOTTED AND SCHEMED FROM THE VOID AND CONCEIVED A PLAN."

LOOK AT HIM -- SO SMUG, SO CONFIDENT, SO MALE!
HE HAS US ALL TRAPPED -- HELPLESS! OR SO HE WOULD LIKE TO THINK!
I AM SO SICK OF HIM -- OF HIS TYPE! SWAGGERING -- SO SURE OF HIS POWER!
WELL, I HAVE POWER, TOO!
SPAKOW!
ENCHANTRESS!
SHRAAK!
HAAAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

DO YOU WANT A PLAYMATE, DARLING?
DON'T YOU THINK I WOULD BE MORE FUN?!
SHRAK!
SHRAK!
THADOOM!
ENCHANTRESS! BREAK THE REST OF US LOOSE! WE'LL TAKE HIM ON AS A TEAM!
WHY? I DON'T NEED ANY OF YOU.
IN FACT, WHEN I'M DONE WITH HIM, I INTEND TO KILL YOU ALL MYSELF! THIS WAY, NONE OF YOU CAN RUN OFF!
SHRAAAK!
WHAM!
DEAR ME, SISTER. HAVE YOU BEEN ENCASED IN THAT CAGE OF FLESH SO LONG THAT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHO I AM--OR YOU ARE?
SISTER? HER, TOO?
GIRL, JUST HOW MANY RELATIVES YOU GOT IN THIS PLACE?


I AM NO MAN'S SISTER ... NO MAN'S DAUGHTER!
SHRAK!
WHOOOOOO

AGAIN, YOU ARE ALL TOO LITERAL!
I SPEAK OF THE SOUL, NOT THE FLESH.
SHAK!
FWONP!

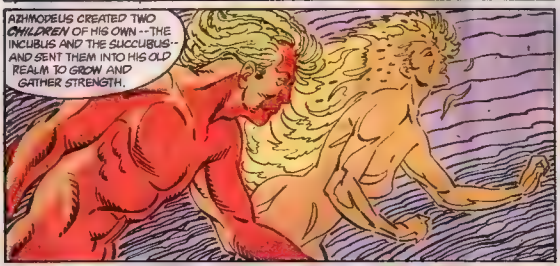
FWONP!

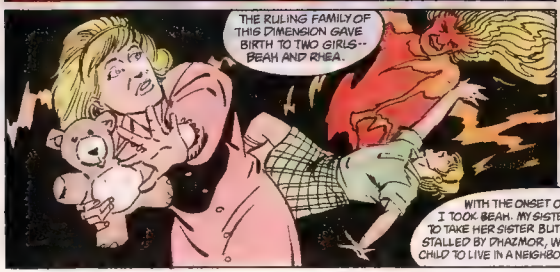
ENOUGH GAMES.
LET'S GET DOWN AND DIRTY.

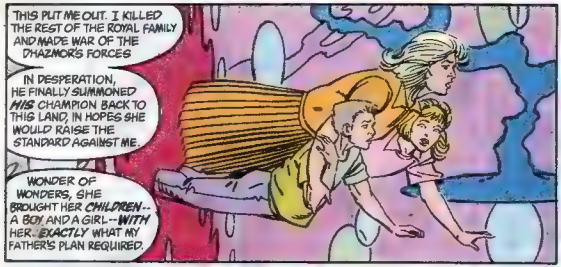
I HAVE A BETTER IDEA. LETS END IT.
YOU WERE GIVEN A POWER THAT BELONGS TO ANOTHER. IT'S TIME YOU GAVE IT BACK!
GUK!
GUK!
AHHHHHHHH!
THIS IS MY TRUE SISTER, THE OTHER OFFSPRING OF AZHMODEUS--THE SUCCUBUS!
ENCHANTRESS! ENCHANTRESS!
DAMN YOU, WITCH! WHERE ARE YOU?!
11

SHE'S HERE. THIS IS HER.
SHALL I EXPLAIN THE LINKAGE?

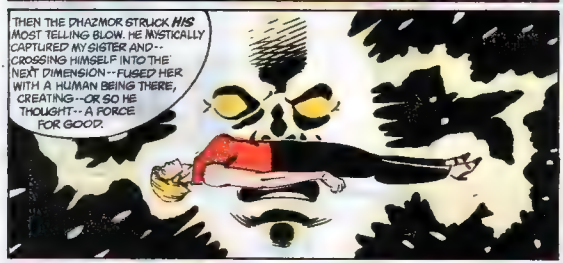
AFTER THE FALL OF AZHMODEUS, HIS LAND WAS COLONIZED BY BEINGS GIVEN CERTAIN POWERS TO HELP BAR HIS RETURN.
A GUARDIAN BEING WAS SET OVER ALL -- A CREATURE CALLED THE DHAZMOR. YES, YOUR DHAZMOR.


AZHMODEUS CREATED TWO CHILDREN OF HIS OWN -- THE INCUBUS AND THE SUCCUBUS -- AND SENT THEM INTO HIS OLD REALM TO GROW AND GATHER STRENGTH.

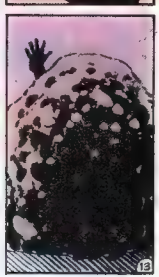

THE RULING FAMILY OF THIS DIMENSION GAVE BIRTH TO TWO GIRLS -- BEAH AND RHEA.
WITH THE ONSET OF PUBERTY, I TOOK BEAH. MY SISTER WAS MEANT TO TAKE HER SISTER BUT WAS FORESTALLED BY DHAZMOR, WHO SENT THE CHILD TO LIVE IN A NEIGHBORING DIMENSION.


THIS PUT ME OUT. I KILLED THE REST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND MADE WAR OF THE DHAZMOR'S FORCES
IN DESPERATION, HE FINALLY SUMMONED HIS CHAMPION BACK TO THIS LAND, IN HOPES SHE WOULD RAISE THE STANDARD AGAINST ME.
WONDER OF WONDERS, SHE BROUGHT HER CHILDREN--A BOY AND A GIRL--WITH HER. EXACTLY WHAT MY FATHER'S PLAN REQUIRED.

IT WAS A DELIGHTFUL DISASTER. MY FORCES TOOK THE BOY AND MORTALLY WOUNDED THE MOTHER. ONLY THE DAUGHTER ESCAPED.


THEN THE DHAZMOR STRUCK HIS MOST TELLING BLOW. HE MYSTICALLY CAPTURED MY SISTER AND--CROSSING HIMSELF INTO THE NEXT DIMENSION--FUSED HER WITH A HUMAN BEING THERE, CREATING--OR SO HE THOUGHT--A FORCE FOR GOOD.

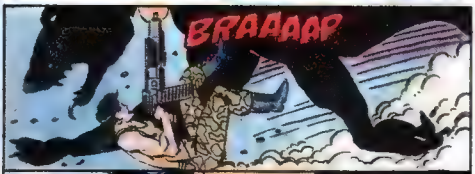
BUT HE OVER-PLAYED HIS HAND. MY SISTER'S NATURE ASSERTED ITSELF. HIS FORCE FOR GOOD BECAME ONE FOR EVIL.
THE DHAZMOR FELL INTO MY HANDS AND MY FORCE REIGNED UNCHECKED IN THIS LAND.



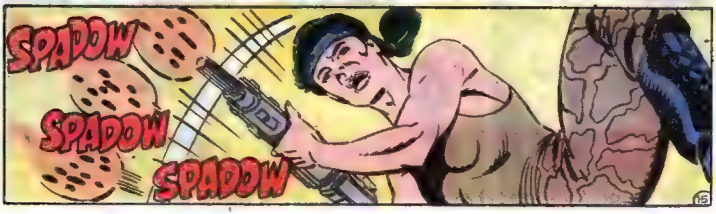
I BEGAN TO MANIPULATE YOU AND THE OTHER MORTAL BY MEANS OF DREAMS, TO BRING YOU BOTH HERE AT THE SAME TIME, SO THAT MY FATHER'S PLAN MAY FINALLY SEE REALITY!
YOU KEEP REFERRING TO THIS PLAN--WHAT IS IT?
THE SUCCUBUS SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE ONE MEANT TO HOUSE HER, DEAR EVE--YOU.
AND THEN YOU AND I WILL MATE.
SUUUUUUUUCK
THE PRODUCT OF OUR UNION WILL SERVE AS THE NEW HOST FOR OUR FATHER. AND IN THAT BODY SHALL AZHMODEUS RETURN TO THE LANDS THAT ARE RIGHTFULLY HIS!
AND NOW--A KISS.
NO!
KRAAAK!

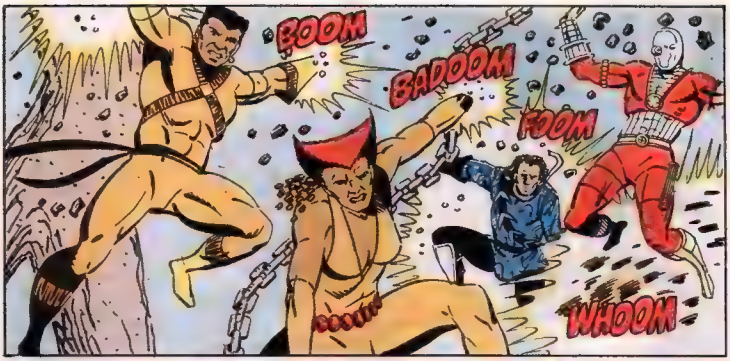
KILL!
I CANNOT BE DISTRACTED RIGHT NOW!

HAROOO!
SNARL!

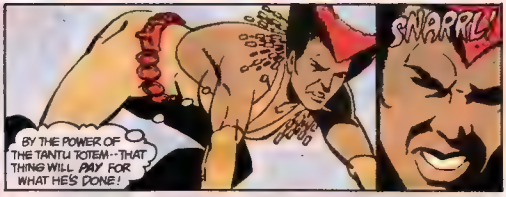

BRAAAAP

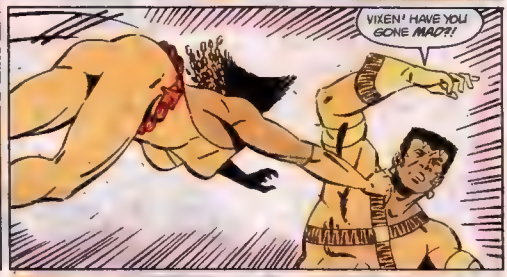
HUH. SHRUGGED OFF HOLLOW POINTS HAVE TO TRY ANOTHER STRATEGY.
KER-CHAK!


SPADOW
SPADOW
SPADOW

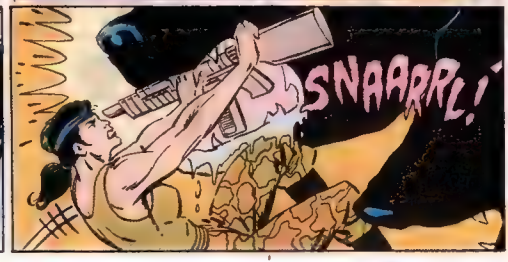

BOOM
BADOOM
FOOM
WHOOM

EVERYONE FOCUS ON THE INCUBUS!
DON'T LET HIM GET A HOLD OF NIGHTSHADE!


BY THE POWER OF THE TANTU TOTEM··THAT THING WILL PAY FOR WHAT HE'S DONE!
SNARRL!

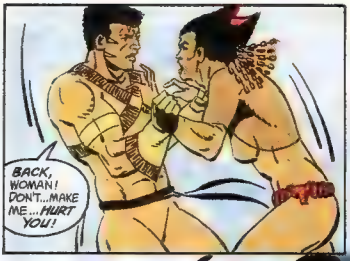

VIXEN! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?!

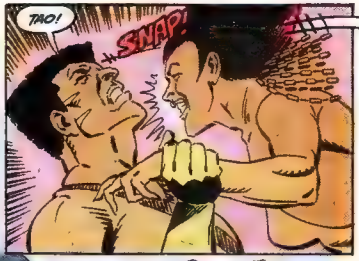
ALL ANIMALISTIC NATURES IN THIS PLACE ARE SUBJECT TO MY CONTROL.


SNAARRL!

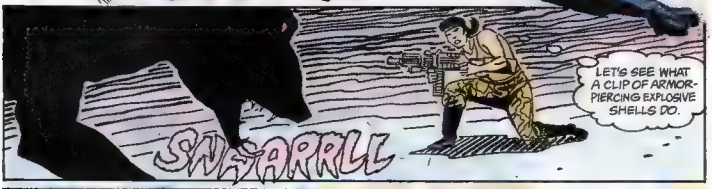
HEY. WAKE UP. THERE'S WORK TO DO.
G'WAY. I'M DEAD. THE DEAD DON'T HAVTA MOVE.
C'MON. WAKEY WAKEY.
BROW!
SPANG!
BLOODY HELL! AIN'TCHER GOT A DROP O' BLEEDIN' MERCY IN YA?
SNIFF!S AH, JEEZ! WHAT A MESS!
LISTEN, DO US ALL A FAVOR AND JUST LIE THERE
G'DAY. T'YOU, TOO.
RRRUMBLE
WOMP
WOMP
WOMP
DAMN!

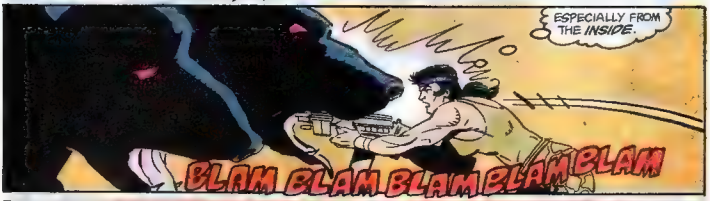
AND NOW, DEAR SISTER— IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD--- YOU ARE MINE.
LARRY, I DON'T THINK I WANT TO BE YOUR SISTER ANYMORE.
I'M NOT LARRY.
I USED TO BE LARRY. NOW, IT'S LIKE HAVING A NAME FOR YOUR FAVORITE COAT.
NOW I AM THE ANSWER TO EVERY MAIDEN'S PRAYER.
MMMMRRRRR!

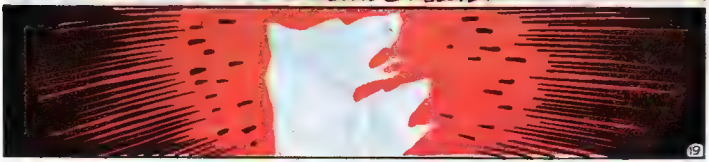

BACK, WOMAN! DON'T...MAKE ME...HURT YOU!


TAO!
SNAP!

UHNNNG!
FLIP


LET'S SEE WHAT A CLIP OF ARMOR-PIERCING EXPLOSIVE SHELLS DO.
SNAARRLL


ESPECIALLY FROM THE INSIDE.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM



OMMHH!
SHRESHHHHH!

YOU'VE FAILED.
EVE IS NOW TRULY MY SISTER-- IN BODY AND SOUL.

NOW I CAN GIVE YOU MY FULL ATTENTION.

WHAM

THEN YOU'RE A FOOL.
DO YOU THINK I AM NOW YOUR WILLING, COMPLIANT TOOL?

YOU MADE ME YOUR *EQUAL* -- AND I *HATE* YOU FOR DRAGGING ME DOWN TO THAT LEVEL!

KRAAK

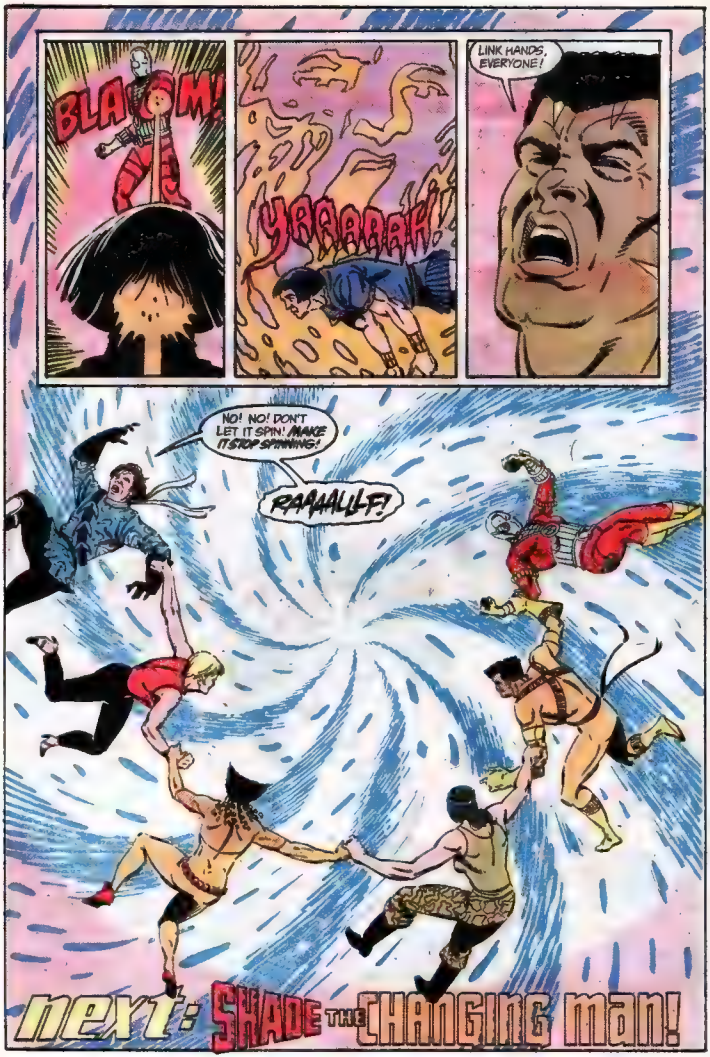
YOUR *RAW STRENGTH* IS *INTERESTING*, SISTER. BUT I HAVE AS MUCH AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN USING IT!

WHAT'S *HAPPENING*? THE ENTIRE PLACE SEEMS TO BE COMING *UNGLUED*!

IT IS. THEIR FIGHT MUCKS WITH THE VERY NATURE OF *REALITY*. THIS DIMENSION IS *DISSOLVING* UNDER US!

THAT RIGHT?

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO PUT AN *END* TO THIS SHEBANG.


BLA M!
YRRRRRR!
LINK HANDS, EVERYONE!
NO! NO! DON'T LET IT SPIN! MAKE IT STOP SPINNING!
RAAAALLF!
next: SHADE THE CHANGING man!

SUICIDE NOTES

L-9171

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Dear Mr. Greenberger,

I hope that you realize that there are probably children reading this comic book. I mean, just look at the following comments made throughout the story in SUICIDE SQUAD #11:

Captain Boomerang: "Nice, firm, round, jiggly talent." Boomerang again: "Don't put your bra in a wringer." Vixen: "I hate these underwire bras." And Vixen, yet again: "I've had gynecological exams that weren't as thorough."

Mr. Greenberger, what's the hang-up with female anatomy? Are you the person who is going to tell all these children out here in readerland what underwire brassieres are for? Are you going to have to explain to a naive young boy what a gynecological examination entails? I didn't think so. Shame. Shame.

But, all the aforementioned tomfoolery aside, "Blood and Snow" wasn't a half-bad little story. The main plot-line is moving along well, but one wonders if anything the Squad does will ever go the way it is supposed to. The minor touches weren't bad, either: Captain Boomerang's masquerade as Mirror Master, Senator Cray's meeting with Derek Tolliver and Vixen's remembrances of the Justice League.

I'm also enjoying the addition of Speedy (although he hasn't really done that much, as of yet). His rapport with Nightshade on page 14 almost brought tears to this old man's eyes. Speedy has been through more pain than just about any other hero in DC Comics' long history. One can understand why he is involved so deeply in the struggle against drug dealers. One can also understand how he can accept the death of Senor Cujo. Yes, it is justice. But does it ever stop hurting, really?

Roger D. Case
1199 Waterfront Drive #202
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

To the best of our knowledge, Roger, more and more of our comics are being read by an older segment of the audience. Also, a book like SUICIDE SQUAD pushes the edge of what is allowable under the Comics Code. We have changed language to suit their restrictions, but we still want to present a book with a definite tone and edge. It's that very tone that probably drives away some of the younger comics readers, who prefer straight action. Television has done a fine job of letting people know all about jiggly talent and there have been numerous public service spots, at all hours of the day and night, urging women to have regular gynecological exams. And lately, television has allowed live models to sport bras during advertisements. Who's going to explain to those children when they ask their parents?

*****

Dear Squadsters,

I was afraid this issue wouldn't live up to my expectations for it—few comics could. Fortunately, this comic was one: The Squad's first full return to action since the Mission to Moscow picked up where that story left off. Although the Squad was divided, with half of them in the DP-SS SPECIAL, I felt that the team was as interesting as ever. This was all right because of the presence of Speedy and Vixen. Speedy's connection with the Squad is obvious and Vixen's appealing. This is the type of team she belongs in—I liked this version much better, than the one in the old JLA. I also enjoyed the description of the drug problem in Colombia. It was completely consistent with all I have read about the situation in school.

Another high point of the issue was the beginning of the Joe Cray storyline. This is a logical idea, given the leaks in the government and the single-issue politics that has historically popped up from time to time. Ultimately, this may be the toughest opponent for the Squad—it's not the kind of opponent that can be overpowered. It will tax the creative limits of Task Force X (and the writing staff).

Rick Toothaker
7713 Narrow Pass
San Antonio, TX 78233

*****

Dear John, Robert, Luke, Bob and company,

A working relationship by such diverse characters as Speedy and Vixen would seem almost folly in the hands of a less able scripter, but John brought it off well.

Issue #11 of SUICIDE SQUAD was a turning point in the book. Not only did it show that the group can perform without Flag den-mothering the group, it showed that John can mesh characters well enough to provide an enjoyable story. The basic problem with #11 wasn't the team but with certain motivation problems. Flag is a single-minded leader who does what he does because he's convinced he's *right*. I'm not sure that Speedy and Nightshade have the leadership qualities to lead a team on a *suicide* mission. It would seem that if you are involved in a mission that could quite likely get you killed, you would have a clear-headed idea that what you did was right. A feeling of uncertainty would seem to jeopardize the mission and endanger the operatives involved. Since Nightshade and Speedy seem reluctant regarding their commitments about killing a drug dealer, they seem to be fouling up the success of the mission. If they aren't sure what they are doing, why didn't Mrs. Waller go along to keep tabs on them? It would be interesting to see her go on a mission she organized.

Although it was good to see Speedy wearing combat breeches and boots, it was almost painful to see Nightshade running around the jungle in a mini-shirt. Her costume needs to be redesigned for all-terrain warfare. If you can cut the Enchantress' Halloween hat, can't you fix Nightshade's wardrobe?

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, KS

*****

Dear Mr. Ostrander,

I'm so glad someone at DC has decided to utilize some very deserving heroines! DC has some of the most unsung female characters in the industry today. Characters such as Nightshade, Vixen, Enchantress and Black Orchid are great and should be used more often. I know that the Enchantress is slightly unstable, but I like her that way; a reader never knows how she'll act and react to others.

Jody Hamby
Route 1 Box 67
Robbins, TN 37852

*****

Dear Bob,

I never expected SUICIDE SQUAD to be one of my favorites, but it is, and "Blood and Snow Part One" was another good issue.

It was nice to see Speedy and Vixen once again. They've never been favorites of mine, but both are interesting characters. Perhaps after their appearances here we'll see more of

them, although I thought Vixen was meant to join the Squad. Perhaps that'll come next issue.

Anyway, the story was good, although the super-characters versus drug dealers theme has been done to death. The shooting of the models and camera crew was shocking and it was a surprise to see Mirror Master back again, considering he's dead.

One thing I like about this comic is that we get to see the characters working undercover. Most super-powered people in comics would just have invaded Xavier Cujo's home and dealt with him there and then, but the Squad wormed their way in silently, using different personas and situations to get close to their prey. I like that; it adds a bit more interest to the story.

In closing, I'll just say that I'd like to see Catwoman, Crime Doctor, Dr. Destiny, Golden Glider and the second Icicle to appear in the Squad.

Gary Hellen
7 Chestnut Grove
Brentwood, Essex CM14 4XH
United Kingdom

*****

Dear Robert, John, Luke, Bob L., Todd and Carl,

"Blood and Snow Part One" was a set-up issue, as was SS #1, the difference being that Task Force X saw more action in Colombia and the operatives on hand included two new faces, three largely unused-of-late characters (Nightshade, Enchantress and the Black Orchid) and only one real regular (Boomerang). The biggest surprise was Briscoe. In the past, I'd thought of him as the solid, strong type, better left to puttering around offstage with Sheba than to appearing in the helicopters, a first-rate stalker and a man wholly uninterested in Jane Moone. In a way, his skills and attitude compensated for the absence of Col. Flag, Deadshot and the Bronze Tiger.

Having Nightshade take charge made for a good change of pace, although her moral objections seemed less applicable to Cujo than they did to the undercover work she did with the Jihad and to the handling of the William Hell case—due process can't stop Cujo, as Mrs. Waller and Speedy point out. I liked the deepening of her mystery; while in #3, it seemed as if she had been blackmailed into joining the Squad, here she was able to blackmail Mrs. Waller. Her reflections on being a Girl Scout were also fine. I also enjoyed June's coming on to Briscoe—since her alter ego is so uncontrollable, it's easy to forget how nice June Moone is, yet also how normal—that, on occasion, she feels like snuggling up with a good-looking man. But is Sheba's daddy really her type?

Vixen was able to show her stuff as Mari McCabe clearly enough on pages one to four, but I regretted not seeing the Tantu Totem at work. The Orchid had no chance to do anything, but seeing the Captain interrupted at the bank robbery to answer his beeper was hilarious. The Mirror Master plot-line has a lot of potential—what will the Captain do if one of his old Rogues' Gallery associates seeks him out?

Charles J. Sperling
37-15 Parsons Blvd. Apt. 4C
Flushing, NY 11354

*****

And now, in the space remaining, a look at responses to DOOM PATROL/SUICIDE SQUAD SPECIAL #1:

Dear Bob,

I don't collect DOOM PATROL, sorry to say, since I can't fit it into my expenses. But I *do* collect SUICIDE SQUAD, so by all means, I bought the crossover book! When I bought it I only noticed Col. Flag on the cover. I hoped that Flag wouldn't be the only member of the Squad in the book. Luckily, I got my wish—sort of. The only member I heard of was Mister 104, due to the fact that I have TEEN TITANS SPOTLIGHT #9, and was sorry to see him go. Psi was a scantily dressed, unattractive woman who reminded me of Natasha of *Bullwinkle* fame. Thinker reminded me of the Leader from *The Hulk* and the Weasel from Marvel's Vermin. No tears were shed by me to see those three gone. I can't comment on the Doom Patrol, because they're new to me, save Robotman ... er ... Cliff. But I can say they are intriguing characters.

For a story that was going to be a fill-in, it was mighty spectacular! Erik Larsen is a newcomer to me, too. I caught his work at Marvel and it was good. Then I saw his work in the last two issues of THE OUTSIDERS and was turned off by it. But boy, did he do a good job in this SPECIAL!

Joseph M. Kucharski III
1116 Sycamore Street
Haddon Heights, NJ 08035

*****

Dear Editors,

My congratulations on the DOOM PATROL/SUICIDE SQUAD SPECIAL. For once, Erik Larsen's art wore well with me. He did a good job of keeping the suspense up and the lengthy fight scenes interesting. It was a hell of a war. And like most wars, it was all for nothing. The only tangible result was the life of Hawk being spared—and frankly, that isn't all that much of a gain. Rick Flag's rep took a further dunking with this story, as he lost his entire Squad this trip and barely escaped with his underwear himself. The Doom Patrol came off best in the reputation department. When *both* sides are wrong, Contras and Sandinistas, anybody who gets in the middle is asking for nothing but grief—and will get it.

Now, we've lost four villains from the DC Universe. For those who didn't recognize Psi, she originated in Paul Kupperberg's final spinaround of SUPERGIRL. We lost a 1940s Golden Age classic in The Thinker; and in Mr. 104 we lost somebody who could have been salvaged. After all, Rex Mason bought it earlier in the year and the Elementals are in short supply. Is it a bad horoscope year for element-changers, or what?

John Ostrander continues his own private holocaust by wiping out another old Firestorm enemy, the Weasel. Geez, he'll be putting out a contract on Gerry himself next! If John keeps it up, old Flamehead won't have anybody to fight!

Well, maybe he'll have one. I must confess I am very impressed and intrigued with this Stalnoivolk bruiser. He could give any hero in America a nasty scrap. I'll be looking forward to what Ostrander does with him. Zastrow. Brrrr. Like in the old movies, you know you're *really* in trouble when the short, weasely agent enters the room and talks to you in a low hiss.

Charles D. Brown
39 Stockton Street
Brentwood, NY 11717

*****

Dear John and Paul,

Goody, goody, a good, old-fashioned blood bath. I loved it! I found the SPECIAL a fascinating tale, with excellent art and fascinating character interaction and development.

In the "fiction mirrors reality" department, recently another U.S. citizen was caught illegally in Nicaragua. Too bad no super-heroes are around to rescue him.

What you did with Flag and Zastrow set up interesting developments to come. Based on a scale of five skunks to five stars, I give this four stars.

Kiril Kundurazieff
2439 Merrywood Street
Pomona, CA 91767

*****

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Short on space, so I'll just remind you that SECRET ORIGINS #28 has Nightshade's full story and that next month we conclude "Nightshade's Odyssey" with a sidetrip to the Meta-Zone and a meeting with Shade, the Changing Man! All that plus a return to Earth, an all-out attack in Manhattan, the addition of Captain Cold and a few more tidbits.

Keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger

OSTRANDER, McDONNELL & LEWIS

SUICIDE SQUAD

17
$1.00
CAN $1.35
U.K. 50p
SEPT. 88

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THE JIHAD IS BACK AND THE SUICIDE SQUAD IS G

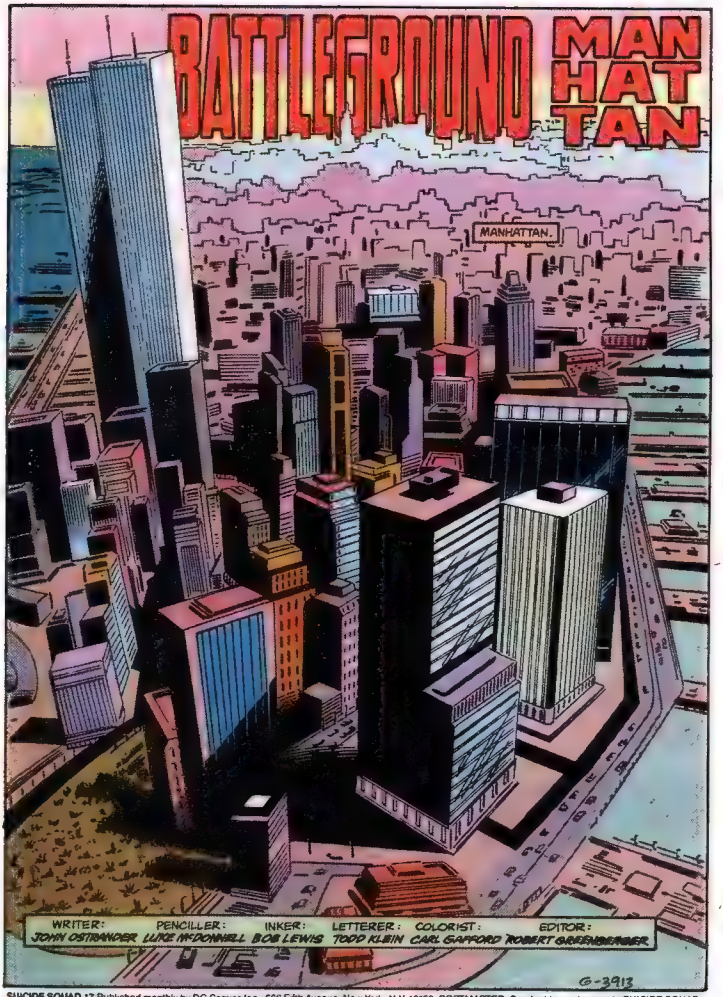
THROUGH I SAY RE THROUGH!

I'M NOT YO OFFICER, I YOUR SOCIAL AND I DON'T HAV BE NICE TO YOU

YOU AS YOU'RE OR I'L OFF

EVER SINC KARIN S E CO EEN

SS



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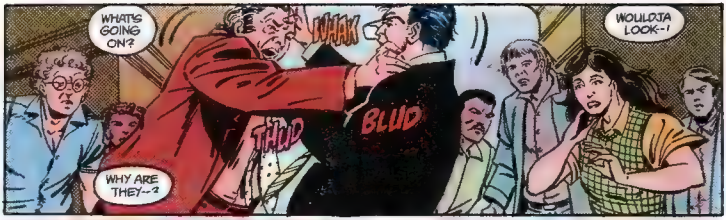
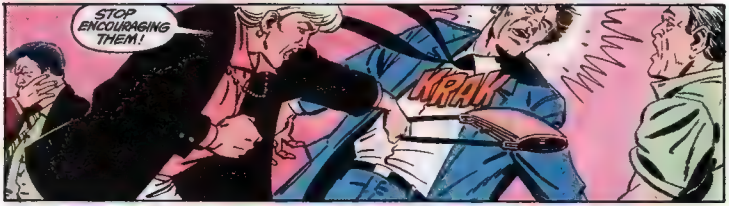
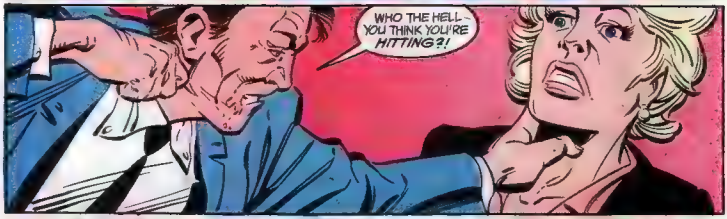
MECCA TO SOME.
GODDAM TO OTHERS.
Coca-Cola
Castro
THERE IS POWER IN THIS CITY TO BE HAD, POWER OVER THOUGHTS AND IDEAS AND HOW THEY ARE COMMUNICATED.
YOU WOULD NOT THINK, TO LOOK AT IT, THAT IT IS FRAGILE.
BUT IT IS CIVILIZATION IS ALWAYS FRAGILE. CIVILIZATION IS MORE THAN BUILDINGS, YOU SEE. ITS AN ATTITUDE, A FEELING OF SAFETY.
AND THIS IS SUCH A DANGEROUS WORLD.
LINCOLN TUNN

EXCUSE ME... BUT ARE YOU OKAY, MISS? YOU'RE NOT LOST OR SOMETHING, ARE YOU?
OOF!
EX-CUSE ME! DO YOU MIND NOT RUNNING UP MY BACKSIDE?!
WHAT THE HELL YOU DOING JUST STANDING THERE, JERK? TRYING TO GET A DATE OR WHAT?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU IMPLYING?!
I'M NOT IMPLYING-- I'M SAYING! I KNOW ALL ABOUT PERVERTS LIKE YOU...!
YOU SON-OF-A-!
WHAM


WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAK!
WOULDJA LOOK--!
THUD
BLUD
WHY ARE THEY--?

HAW! C'MAHN! UPPERCUT! UPPERCUT!

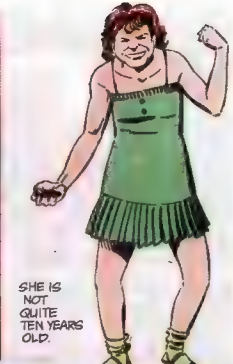

STOP ENCOURAGING THEM!
KRAK


WHO THE HELL YOU THINK YOU'RE HITTING?!

KRAK
WHAM
POW!
CLICKIN!
THUD

SHE COMES FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AND ALL HER FAMILY DIED IN "THE TROUBLES."

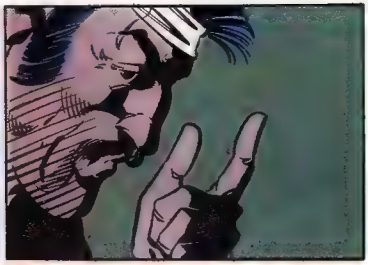
ALL SHE HAS IS HATE... A HATE FELT FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD. A FIERCE, *EXULTANT* HATE, AND HER... "TALENTS."

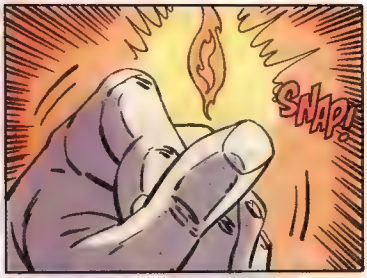

SHE IS NOT QUITE TEN YEARS OLD.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
HER CODENAME IS *BADS*.

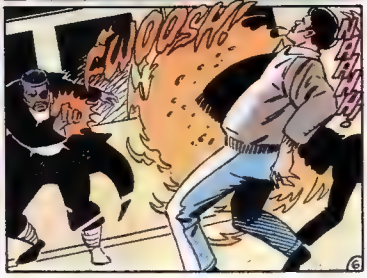
NOW COME MEET *AGNI*.
SUBWAY-UPTOWN

AWAY FROM TRACKS
BROAAARR!




SNAP!

FWOOMP!
YAAAH!


SWOOSH!

DRIVER
FASHH!
WOOOSH!
SHWOOMP!
STAND CLEAR
POOOSH!
THIS IS AGNI.

WHERE'S McKEON? BET HE'S SLEPT LATE AGAIN.
LET'S SEE-- DO I WANT HIS BUTT AS FILET OR GROUND ROUND?
URRGK! GLAAAAGKK!
A THOUSAND YEARS MORE, O KALI..
SNICK
TEK

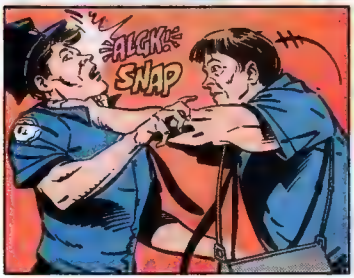
KOSHCHE!. ARE YOU RECEIVING? DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT TO DO?

...FINISH HERE...MEET AT...TIMES SQUARE...

GOOD. HERE'S YOUR BAG. SEE YOU SOON.

ANDERS! HEY! AM I LATE? SORRY!

THE WIFE SAYS I'LL BE LATE FOR MY OWN FUNER...

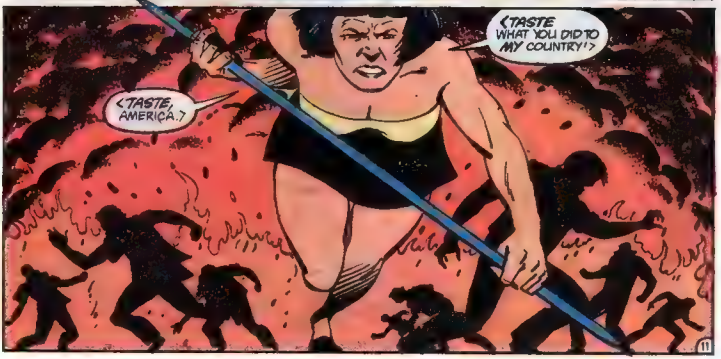

ALGH!
SNAP

SNEK

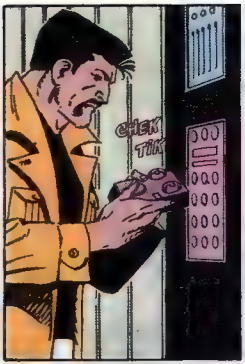
SYSTEM READY. KOSHCHEI PROCEEDS.
SYSTEM READY. KOSHCHEI PROCEEDS.
FIFTH AVENUE.
HEY!
WHO THE--!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--?!
HER NAME IS JACULI.
FINK
YAAAAAH!
SHOTLOCK
WHADOOM!

FING
FING
WOOOSH

BOOOM
BOOM
FOOM!
TAXI

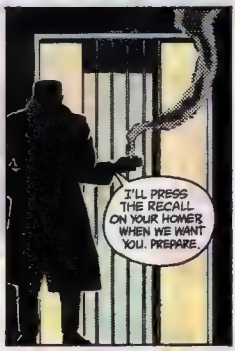

<TASTE AMERICA.>
<TASTE WHAT YOU DID TO MY COUNTRY!>

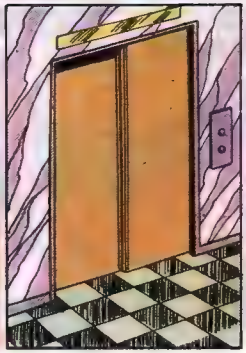
WORLD TRADE CENTER.


CHEK TIK

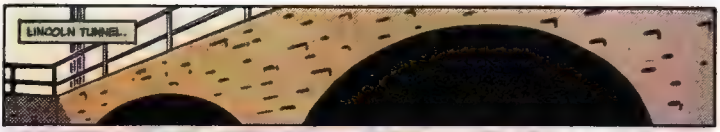
SAY MY NAME.
RUSTAM.
SAY YOUR NAME.
IFRIT.

STATE YOUR MISSION.
ENTER COMPUTER BANKS. WIPE MEMORY. DISRUPT TRADE. KILL ALL I FIND. REJOIN JIHAD.

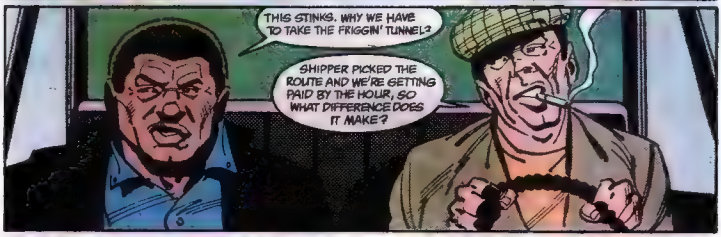

I'LL PRESS THE RECALL ON YOUR HOMER WHEN WE WANT YOU. PREPARE.

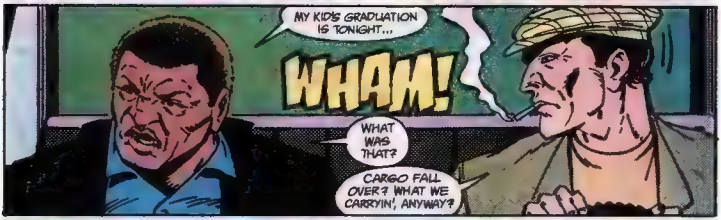


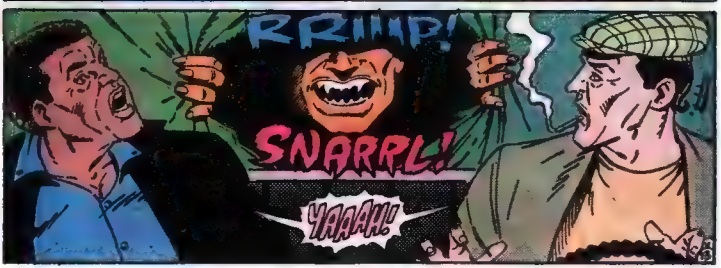
YAAAAAGH!


LINCOLN TUNNEL..

TAXI
RUSH HOUR.


THIS STINKS. WHY WE HAVE TO TAKE THE FRIGGIN' TUNNEL?
SHIPPER PICKED THE ROUTE AND WE'RE GETTING PAID BY THE HOUR, SO WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

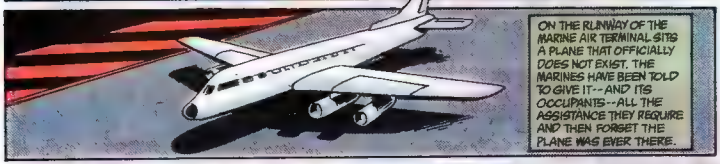

MY KID'S GRADUATION IS TONIGHT...
WHAM!
WHAT WAS THAT?
CARGO FALL OVER? WHAT WE CARRYIN', ANYWAY?


RRIIP!
SNARRL!
YAAAH!

THE MANTICORE HAS BEEN UNLEASHED!
SHCRANGK!
RRROARRR!
BRANG!
FFFFFIP
UUUIP! UP
SHWOMP!
BADOOOM!
14

SNARRRL!
ROARRRR
BOOOM!
HAWROOOOO!

LAGUARDIA AIRPORT.
TWA

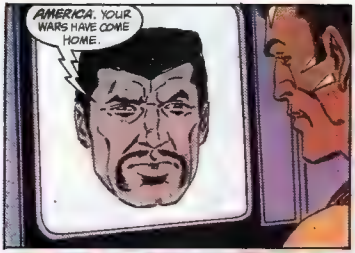

ON THE RUNWAY OF THE MARINE AIR TERMINAL SITS A PLANE THAT OFFICIALLY DOES NOT EXIST. THE MARINES HAVE BEEN TOLD TO GIVE IT -- AND ITS OCCUPANTS -- ALL THE ASSISTANCE THEY REQUIRE AND THEN FORGET THE PLANE WAS EVER THERE.

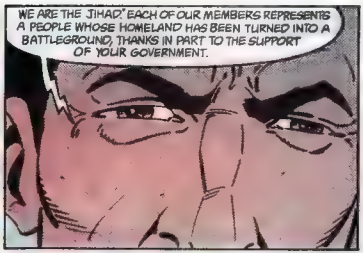
IF I CONTINUE TO ASSIST YOUR GROUP, YOU WILL, IN TURN, PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SO I CAN FIND A WAY BACK TO *META*?
THAT'S THE DEAL AS THE WALL OUTLINED IT.

NO DISRESPECT, BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH HELP *YOUR* TECHNOLOGY WILL BE. BY METAN STANDARDS, IT'S PRETTY *PRIMITIVE*.
IT'S ALL YOU'VE GOT. *YOUR* PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO KILL YOU ON SIGHT

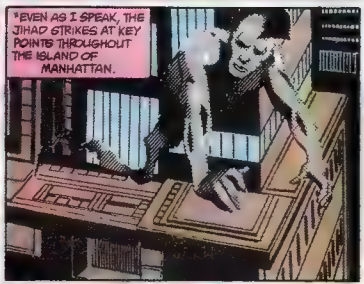
COLONEL! GOT A TRANSMISSION YOU BETTER LOOK AT!

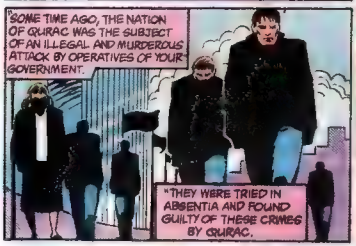
BELLE REVE JUST GOT THIS OFF A NETWORK NEWS FEED. JUST FINISHED PLAYING.
THE ANCHOR GOT SHOT DEAD AND *THIS* GUY TOOK OVER.
RUSTAM!

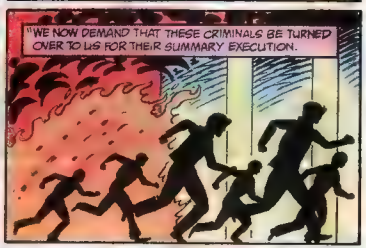

AMERICA. YOUR WARS HAVE COME HOME.


WE ARE THE JIHAD. EACH OF OUR MEMBERS REPRESENTS A PEOPLE WHOSE HOMELAND HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A BATTLEGROUND, THANKS IN PART TO THE SUPPORT OF YOUR GOVERNMENT.

"TONIGHT, YOU WILL TASTE THE FEAR AND DESTRUCTION OUR HOMELANDS HAVE KNOWN.


"EVEN AS I SPEAK, THE JIHAD STRIKES AT KEY POINTS THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN.


"SOME TIME AGO, THE NATION OF QURAC WAS THE SUBJECT OF AN ILLEGAL AND MURDEROUS ATTACK BY OPERATIVES OF YOUR GOVERNMENT.
"THEY WERE TRIED IN ABSENTIA AND FOUND GUILTY OF THESE CRIMES BY QURAC.

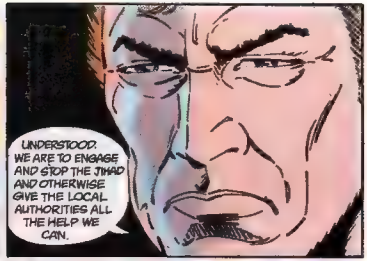

"WE NOW DEMAND THAT THESE CRIMINALS BE TURNED OVER TO US FOR THEIR SUMMARY EXECUTION.

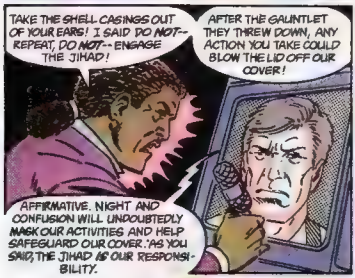
"WE WILL CONTINUE OUR ACTIVITIES UNTIL OUR DEMANDS ARE MET OR WE OURSELVES ARE DEAD. THE BLOOD NOW BEING SHED IS ENTIRELY ON YOUR HANDS, AMERICA."

GO SPEAKS THE JIHAD.
GET ME BELLE REVE.

YOU'RE FOR THE BRIDGES NEXT?
YES. HAVE YOU DONE THE MAYOR YET?
NO. THE BROADCAST HAD PRIORITY.
DO IT NOW THEN RENDEZVOUS AT TIMES SQUARE.
A MOMENT.
BRAAAAAP!
YAAAAA!
DOES NOT THE THUGGEE SECT DEMAND YOU BURY YOUR SACRIFICES? WE HAVE LITTLE TIME.
WITH THIS, I NEED LITTLE.
BOOM!
THE PICKAX HEAD IS A HIGH EXPLOSIVE, DETONATES ON CONTACT.
WE THUGGEES MUST KEEP PACE WITH THE TIMES.

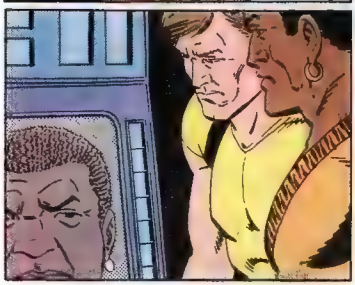
YOU'RE TO GET YOUR BUTTS BACK TO BELLE REVE ON THE DOUBLE, COLONEL! LET THE LOCALS HANDLE THE JIHAD!

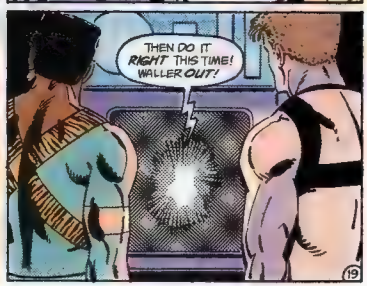

UNDERSTOOD. WE ARE TO ENGAGE AND STOP THE JIHAD AND OTHERWISE GIVE THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ALL THE HELP WE CAN.


TAKE THE SHELL CASINGS OUT OF YOUR EARS! I SAID DO NOT-- REPEAT, DO NOT-- ENGAGE THE JIHAD!
AFTER THE GAUNTLET THEY THREW DOWN, ANY ACTION YOU TAKE COULD BLOW THE LID OFF OUR COVER!
AFFIRMATIVE. NIGHT AND CONFUSION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MASK OUR ACTIVITIES AND HELP SAFEGUARD OUR COVER. AS YOU SAID, THE JIHAD IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

YOU'RE GOING TO GO AHEAD WITH THIS NO MATTER WHAT I SAY, CORRECT?
THAT IS AN AFFIRMATIVE.

LET ME TALK TO TURNER
I HEARD THE SAME THINGS THE COLONEL DID, MRS. WALLER.




THEN DO IT RIGHT THIS TIME! WALLER OUT!

FIND OUT APPROXIMATE JIHAD LOCATIONS FROM THE POLICE BANDS.
WE'LL GET OUR MARINE "HOSTS" TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION

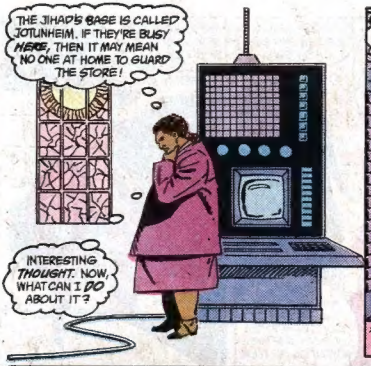
HEY, BEFORE YOU GO OFF AND GET YOURSELF KILLED, HOWZABOUT TAKIN' THIS DOO-HICKEY OFF MY WRIST?

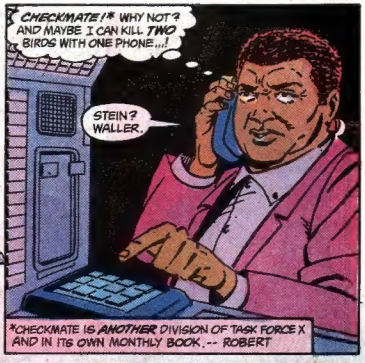
AFTER WE'VE DEALT WITH THE JIHAD.
NOT WITH ME! WE HAD A DEAL! I HELP YOU WITH THOSE META BOZOS AND I GET TURNED LOOSE!
I DONE MY PART! THAT'S IT! I'M THROUGH!

YOU'RE THROUGH WHEN I SAY YOU'RE THROUGH!
GET THIS STRAIGHT, SLEAZE-BALL--I'M NOT YOUR FRIEND, I'M NOT YOUR PAROLE OFFICER, I'M NOT YOUR SOCIAL WORKER, AND I DON'T HAVE TO BE NICE TO YOU!

NOW YOU DO AS YOU'RE TOLD OR I'LL BLOW OFF YOUR ARM MY-SELF!

EVER SINCE THAT KARIN SHEILA DIED, THE COLONEL'S BEEN A LOT LESS HUMOROUS.
MAAAYBE I'LL TEASE SOMEONE ELSE FER A WHILE.

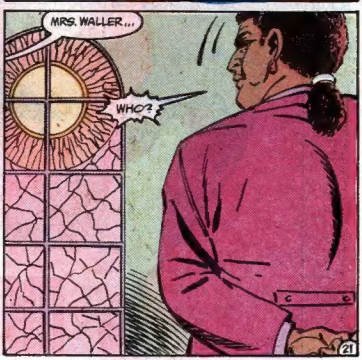

THE JIHAD'S BASE IS CALLED JOTUNHEIM. IF THEY'RE BUSY HERE, THEN IT MAY MEAN NO ONE AT HOME TO GUARD THE STORE!
INTERESTING THOUGHT. NOW, WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?


CHECKMATE!* WHY NOT? AND MAYBE I CAN KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE PHONE...!
STEIN? WALLER.
*CHECKMATE IS ANOTHER DIVISION OF TASK FORCE X AND IN ITS OWN MONTHLY BOOK.-- ROBERT

YEAH, I SEEN 'EM. NO, THE SQUAD'S DEALING WITH THAT. WE'VE GOT INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS BUILDING-- FORGET ABOUT THE QURAC MISSION FOR NOW! GOT ME? RIGHT.

SOMETHING ELSE I WANT YOUR END TO DO. DIG UP ANY AND ALL DIRT YOU CAN GET ON DEREK TOLLIVER AND SENATOR JOE CRAY.
NO, I'M TRYING TO KEEP US FROM GETTING POLITICAL! JUST DO IT, OKAY?--BUT HARRY, KEEP IT ON THE QT. RIGHT. I'LL BE BY LATER ON.

CHECKMATE WASN'T FORMED UNTIL AFTER TOLLIVER GOT KICKED OUT AS NSC-TASK FORCE X LIAISON! HE WON'T KNOW DIDDLEY ABOUT THEM!
AND IF I CAN BUY US SOME TIME, CHECKMATE MAY GET THE POOP WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HIS NEW TRAP!


MRS. WALLER...
WHO?

NIGHTSHADE, EVE EDEN.
I HEARD WHAT WAS GOING DOWN IN NEW YORK. I WANT TO JOIN THE OTHERS.
MS EDEN -- NIGHTSHADE -- YOU LOOK LIKE HELL. AND I DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN GET YOU THERE IN TIME FOR YOU TO DO ANY GOOD.
SEND ME OR I'LL RESIGN AND GO ON MY OWN.
IN A WAY, JIHAD IS ALSO MY GROUP. BECAUSE OF YOU. I WANT TO SEE IF I CAN STOP THEM WITHOUT KILLING THEM.
TRY TO KEEP THEM FROM KILLING YOU WHILE YOU'RE AT IT. WE'LL GET A JET TO FERRY YOU.
THANKS. I THINK.
I'M GONNA HAVE TO KICK SOMEBODY'S BUTT AGAIN AND SOON. EVERYBODY IN THE DAMN SQUAD IS IGNORING WHAT I TELL THEM!
RINGGG
WALLER? DEREK TOLLIVER. DEADLINE TIME.
GONNA HELP SENATOR GRAY GET RE-ELECTED? OR DO WE BLOW THE WHISTLE ON YOUR PRECIOUS SUICIDE SQUAD?
YOU WIN, TOLLIVER.
WE'LL DO IT.
NEXT:
MANHATTAN MASSACRE!

SUICIDE NOTES

L-3248

DC Comics Inc.
666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103

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Patrick Caldon, Controller

Dear Bob,

It just gets better and better.

What made "Battle Lines" so good was that it bent the cliched super-hero slugfest on its ear.

It was *so* pleasing, for once, not to see the members of opposing good-guy teams just start slugging with no regard to past or present friendships or allegiances.

John Ostrander, however, is no hack. He did his homework well, making the meeting of J'onn J'onzz and Vixen truly poignant. And even better, he showed several of the participants actually interested in doing the job they came to do! Rocket Red consulting with Nemesis ... Black Canary asking the Bronze Tiger what's going on ... Nightshade and Captain Atom linking up ... Flag explaining the situation to Batman (okay, so it didn't turn out so well—at least he tried).

And now, since the Squad's cover is just about blown, what next? I don't know, but I can't wait to find out.

You guys can't do this weekly, can you?

Kelvin Childs
309 Curtis Street Apt. 12
Syracuse, NY 13208

Weekly? Isn't ACTION COMICS WEEKLY enough? John and Luke have a bit too much to do these days, but we'll try and come up with some more Squad-oriented projects before too much longer.

*****

Dear Suicide Squad,

After the groundwork was laid in JLI #13, I expected an extraordinary story in SUICIDE SQUAD #13. I got it. I especially like the interaction between the characters. This proved to be emotional, heated and humorous.

Vixen and Martian Manhunter were the two characters I most wanted to see. When the two characters were in the JLA, they became very close, and their confrontation was handled well. It would appear that the Manhunter is not as emotionless as he tries to appear.

In my opinion, Batman's behavior was irrational and childish. First of all, he wants the League to run off to Russia to save Nemesis, and then when he finds out that Nemesis is working with the Squad, he changes his mind. Then, of course, he provokes Flag into attacking him. Of course, to top it all off, he quits the JLI. Not that this surprises me when you consider his track record when it comes to working with groups.

One mistake I noticed in the story involved Captain Atom and Nightshade. As of CAPTAIN ATOM ANNUAL #1, Captain Atom no longer works for the government. The two characters' conversation stated otherwise.

One final note. I believe that Duchess has something to do with Bernadeth and Lashina of the Female Furies, and the events in SUICIDE SQUAD #3.

Darcey McLaughlin
PO Box 245
Blackville, New Brunswick EOC 1CO
CANADA

Actually, Darcey, Captain Atom promised President Reagan that he would continue to be a mole in the JLI for the American government, so the comment remains accurate.

*****

Dear Bob,

I have just gotten back into comics after a several-year absence from buying them. I recently picked up JLI #13 and that led me to buy my first issue of SUICIDE SQUAD. Let me say that I am thoroughly impressed! The Squad has some of the qualities that I have begun to admire in the new JLI. The humor that is presented is a refreshing breath of air, and the depth of the characters makes them even more interesting. Thanks for giving me something worth shelling out 75¢ for.

I just have some additional questions and comments. You stated that the Squad was made up of flawed individuals. Just how are Flag and Nightshade flawed? Okay, maybe I can see how Flag might be messed up, but Nightshade? She could dim my lights *anytime!* Since I only have one issue, could you tell me who the mountain woman in fatigues is? She looks like Big Barda, Mr. Miracle's wife. Is she? Also, how about a new costume for Javelin? I really hate the one he has now.

Chris Ayers
Box 8284, MTSU
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Nightshade's entire life has been in the public eye these last few months, so we suspect by now you realize just how flawed Eve is. And Flag is well off the beaten path and descending faster and farther toward the abyss—what will happen to him? Oh, John and I have a few plans up our sleeves. You're close in thinking Duchess is Barda, since there is some linkage. The secret behind Duchess starts to unravel in issue #19, so do reserve a copy today. The Javelin isn't set for a comeback anytime soon, so a new costume is a decision for another day. By the way, welcome back!

*****

Dear Squad,

While comparing the covers of SUICIDE SQUAD and JLI, my eyes understandably were drawn to the logos. While studying SS's, I began thinking about the meaning behind the title. What exactly causes the high mortality rate involved in the missions the Squad undertakes? Who tackled these missions before Task Force X was established?

The answer to the first question ... lack of power, the second ... everyone else. Face it, this is one of the weaker teams in the DC Universe. Whether this is intentional or not, Mr. Ostrander has made the Squad into the most unpredictable, yet successful, teams in action today. Over the past eighteen months or so, you have employed quite a mix of powerful individuals, then either tempering their use within the book or immediately "terminating their membership." Examples of tempering would include Nightshade and Black Orchid, while the extermination option would apply to the likes of Blockbuster, Mindboggler, Multiplex, Killer Frost and the Parasite. More than likely, the dead villains had outlived their usefulness to their respective writers. Plastique, of course, is the exception to this rule, whose appearances in CAPTAIN ATOM prove this. Yet it is ironic that the least powerful members of the group seem to last the longest. More ironic is the wild card of the group, the unstable Enchantress, who seems to play one of the greater parts in these pages each month. In all, the real power behind this book is the government, and you guys who "talk" to us every 30 days.

Chris Hines
RR 1 Debert
Nova Scotia BOM 1GO
CANADA

Actually, Chris, Killer Frost has not died and is set for a return appearance in FIRESTORM, since she is quite popular there. As for the missions the Squad are assigned to, this

is the first time in a long while that the government has had any team to assign to missions that they deem important. It's quite unlikely a hero would have stopped William Hell or flown to Colombia to deal with Cujo.

*****

Dear Bob,

Oh boy. Here we go again. Two super-groups meet each other, battle each other and then realize that they are really on the same side and end up working together.

Seen it before. Usually kind of boring. And predictable.

But not in "Battle Lines."

That it *was* an exception to the rule demonstrates the value of this mag. The Suicide Squad is neither a typical super-hero group nor a typical super-villain group and thus does not fit into the same cubbyholes as most other super-groups do. First off, there was a legitimate reason for the JLI to be antagonistic toward the Squad. The JLI acts in a quasi-official capacity and the Squad was breaking into a government facility. Thus, there were definitely grounds for suspicion, to say the least! And since the Squad contains some known criminals, the JLI's aggressive response was quite rational. (Usually, two super-groups start off by fighting each other seemingly just because they don't know each other! If this was common social etiquette, the sidewalks of every city would be intense battlegrounds!)

However, because the Squad also has some good guys, there were ample reasons for some of the JLIers to try to negotiate with the Squad rather than continue to fight. So often in super-groups battles, after senselessly fighting for a while, the two sides come to a sudden and rather unbelievable (and poorly-motivated) truce.

Finally, the resolution made sense. Justice was done, but it was accomplished by a little finesse rather than by the brute force of the Powerful United Super-team formed by the two formerly adversarial groups.

And I see that Batman still has it in for the Squad. All I can say is: Keep at it, Batman! The moral dimensions of the Squad have faded into the background recently, and maybe Batman's crusade will help to return them to the thematic forefront. I'd like to see even more emphasis put on the Squad's personal problems and the attempts to solve them also. This further enhances the Squad's unique nature and reminds us just why most of the members are there—because they're messed-up individuals, one way or another.

T.M. Maple
Box 1272 Station B
Weston, Ontario M9L 2R9
CANADA

*****

Dear Squad,

SUICIDE SQUAD #13 was great! The guest appearance of the JLI was very humorous. I thought the issue would be a very serious one with devastating casualties on both sides. Boy, was I in for a shocker! The only serious confrontation was the battle between Flag and Batman. I don't know about anyone else, but I'm getting very tired of Flag. I'm glad Batman kicked his butt.

I'm glad Nemesis is finally out. Overall, it was a very different issue, one that I enjoyed.

I've been with SS since #1 and I love this series! I really like the offbeat characters, especially Captain Boomerang. Will he be getting the spin-off mini-series you keep mentioning?

I hope we see more of the personal lives behind the team. We all know what the captain is doing, but what are the other members doing in their "spare" time?

Some suggestions: Captain Cold, Catwoman, Poison Ivy, Black Spider, Flash, Killer Frost, and will we see what happened to Slipknot?

Tom Trout
No Address Given

We will reveal the details on the mini-series next month, so don't miss the issue.

Captain Cold is here and may be back in the future. Catwoman is a must but not until her mini-series concludes in early 1989 (check out the preview in ACTION COMICS WEEKLY #611-#614!). Poison Ivy would be fun, but you'll have to content yourself with her role in the BLACK ORCHID mini-series coming in November. The others are good ideas, so we'll see.

*****

Dear Mr. Greenberger,

With issue #13, this series really started to come into focus. For the first time, John Ostrander had to write an issue where characterization and dialogue were more important than action, and he came through with flying colors. Additionally, he kept the fun flavor of the JLI intact, while allowing the Suicide Squad to retain its identity.

Luke McDonnell's layouts were as fresh as ever, yet special kudos should be given to Bob Lewis, who really tightened up Luke's pencils. I prefer this more focused look and hope its evolution continues.

As for the Squad itself, I'm hoping that the team returns to its primarily villain-based core. Although Speedy and Vixen may be good guest stars, as it stands the Squad has too many super-heroes. This book is at its best when reluctant villains are forced into duty.

Mark Lucas
66 Cleary Court Apt. 902
San Francisco, CA 94109

An interesting observation, Mark. Let's address this question to the audience: Should there be more or less emphasis on super-heroes in the mix?

*****

Dear Bob,

I knew it would only be a matter of time. After seeing Batman pop up here a few months back, it was only a matter of time before he involved the JLI. The pairings were interesting and the best by far was the talk between Vixen and J'onn J'onzz. Like most fans, I too felt that the last incarnation of the JLA stank, but after reading Vixen's feelings I started to feel bad. I feel bad because even though they may not have had the best stories or characters, they did the best with what they had. It isn't much fun walking around and people think you're a joke.

The Captain Atom/Nightshade encounter was interesting as well. Both these characters know more than they can tell their companions and the way they try to figure out how to diffuse the situation was good. But the best pairing was that of Batman and Flag.

It seems only natural that the leaders of the two teams would go at it, but it was a pleasant change to see Flag and Bats try to talk it out first. When groups meet up, there is usually a fight before anybody knows what is going on. Considering that Flag's team comprised several villains, I assumed that a discussion was out of the question.

The best part of the whole issue, though, was Boomerang having a laugh at seeing Batman and Flag beat up on each other. These are the things that most villains only dream of seeing. I'm glad the Captain had a good seat for the show.

Bob Felber
60 Ruskin Avenue
Woonsocket, RI 02895

*****

COMING ATTRACTIONS

The Jihad is back, restaffed and deadlier than before. They have brought Manhattan to its knees and all that stands between them and utter genocide is the Suicide Squad. Tired and understaffed, can they defeat the Jihad, or will they die trying? You've asked for this story and here it is, in 22 very packed pages. Don't miss it!

Until next time, stock up on bandages and keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger